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**Environment Department Advises “BOIL WATER ORDER” for
San Rafael Water & Sanitation District**

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department’s (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau has advised the San Rafael Water & Sanitation District in Cibola County to issue a “boil water order” for the community it serves.

The San Rafael Water & Sanitation District serves approximately 886 consumers and is located about four miles from Grants. This system was put on a “boil water order” on March 7, 2004 due to bacteriological contamination that exceeded the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for *E. coli*. NMED requires that the District notify all consumers served by the water system of this finding.

Users of the San Rafael Water & Sanitation District water system are advised to boil water for five minutes before drinking, cooking, and dishwashing.

The presence of *E. coli* in water indicates that the water may have been in contact with sewage or animal wastes, and could contain disease-causing organisms. Most strains of *E. coli* are harmless and live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals. However, a positive test for *E. coli* in drinking water may indicate the presence of dangerous strains of *E. coli* or other disease-causing organisms, which are sometimes found in sewage. These types of organisms may cause severe gastrointestinal illness and, in rare cases, even death. Children, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals are at an increased risk for illness.

Actions have been initiated to disinfect the water system and identify possible sources of contamination. In addition, the Drinking Water Bureau will monitor the water quality and continue to assist with trouble-shooting to identify the source of the problem.

The Department of Health has been notified of this order and will remain on alert for any health effects linked to this water quality issue. Consumers of the water system may call (505) 476-3028 if they have any water-related health concerns.

For more information contact Chuck Thomas, Hydrologist, NMED, at (505) 841-9029 or Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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